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and is divided into hamlets. The village of Lesu, where the writer lived, has 222 inhabitants living in fifteen hamlets. Each hamlet has its own cemetery and every native wants to be buried in the cemetery of the hamlet in which he was born.

Only the death of a very old person is considered normal. When a native who is not old dies (*i.e.*, one still able to work), his death is usually attributed to black magic. The rites are similar for all deaths, but at the death of an old person they are the most elaborate. The number of people at a funeral, the size of the feast, the elaborateness of the rites, are all graduated nicely to the age of the dead person.[2] If an infant is born dead there are no rites at all. It is buried immediately without feast or wailing. The funeral of a child takes place on the day of the death and is attended only by the people of the neighbouring hamlets. The funeral of a mature person, but not a very old one, will be held the day after death and will be a village affair, with some members of neighbouring villages there. The funeral of a very old person is a large inter-village affair, many people coming from quite distant settlements, and the body will be kept for two or three days before burial. The pattern at death is the same as it is during life. It is the old men and women who are the most important people and who are the leaders of the community.

While alive each person has a double called a *gas* which lives on the ground belonging to his totemic clan.[3] This *gas* is not seen by its living double, although there are rare occasions mentioned in folk tales when a man has met his *gas*. When a person dies his *gas* dies too. At the time of death there issues from the dying man, with his last breath, his *tinuato* or ghost, which has no connection with the *gas*. The *tinuato* dwells in the body while the native is alive and comes out only at his death, while the *gas* always dwells outside on the clan land and dies when the person dies. The *tinuato* or ghost continues to live, but its place of existence and manner of living are very vague. It belongs to the realm of the supernatural, about which no questions are asked. For a month or so after death

[2] Cf. Camilla H. Wedgwood, Death and Social Status in Melanesia, *J.R.A.I.*, Vol. LVII.

[3] *Vide* the writer's Report on Research in New Ireland, *Oceania*, I, 1931, 357.

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a son or daughter, a nephew or uncle, on the mother's side, or a mother. The consort during this period is spending all his time wailing, and not taking any part in the actual preparations.

During this interval between death and burial there is a fairly large group of people assembled at the hamlet where the death occurred. All the clan relatives and their consorts—the extended family—and sometimes a few others are there. At night the sexes sleep separately. All the women sleep in one house and all the men in another, or perhaps the men sleep out of doors in a compound in front of a house. There is abstention from all sexual relations.

If the funeral is that of a very old person and the rites are being carried out in full detail dancing is part of the ceremonial. At the funeral of an old and important woman, Maling (her sister's son was a chief), there was dancing on the two nights which elapsed between the time of death and the burial. Maling died early in the day and that night all the women of the village and the neighbouring villages danced. The next night the men of the village and of neighbouring villages danced. On the following morning the corpse was buried. Each night dancing went on continuously until sunrise. Different groups danced, so that no one person danced all night long. The whole community (the village and neighbouring ones) was present as an audience. If the energy of the dancers appeared to flag, the daughter of the dead woman exhorted them to continue with promises of the payment which would later be made to them. The dances were the traditional ones used on all ritual occasions, and participants were members of the community, regardless of their kinship to the dead person. Dancing is a part of the rites only when the dead person is very old.

The actual burial, however, does not vary very much according to the age of the dead person. Some time in the interval preceding burial the corpse is put in its coffin, usually an old canoe with the pointed ends removed. Members of the opposite moiety carry the corpse from the house in which it has been resting into the cemetery. They are decorated with leaves and white lime is used as a facial adornment. These pall-bearers advance in a square formation, singing, lift up the corpse, circle around the compound two or three times with it and finally carry it into the cemetery. At the same